

A G E N D A

Manure Management Task Force

September 26, 2005

**Cranberry Country Lodge
Harvest Room 9:30 – 3:30**
Hwy 21 & 94
Tomah, WI 54660
1(800) 243-9874
Fax: (608) 374-2805

9:30 A.M.

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call

9:40 A.M.

3. Born and Rude, Task Force Co-Chairs
 - Approve meeting notes
 - Review of task force purpose

10:15 A.M.

4. *Presentation (Dennis Frame and Fred Madison): On-farm manure management research: Discovery Farms*

11:00 A.M.

5. *Presentation (Staff and others): Manure management approaches and programs*

12:00 A. M. to 12:45 P.M.

6. Lunch

12:45 P.M.

7. *Group Discussion:* Framework for evaluating options

3:00 P.M.

8. Chair: Meeting Wrap Up

- Decide on location for October meeting
- Review agenda for next meeting

9. Task Force Member Check Out

3:30 P.M.

10. Adjournment

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MMTF – Sept. 26, 2005
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Tomah, WI 54660
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From the West - La Crosse

From I 90 East

Take I 94 W exit -exit # 45 (on the left side towards Eau Claire)
Take exit 143 (Tomah, US 12, WI 21)

Take a left onto Hwy 21

Go approx 1/4 mile and turn left onto Wittig Rd
Turn left into the Cranberry Country Lodge.

From the West - Minneapolis/St. Paul

From I - 94 East

Take exit 143 (Tomah, US 12, WI 21)

Take a right onto US 12

Left at the first light onto Hwy 21

Go approx 1/4 mile and turn right onto Wittig Rd
Turn left into the Cranberry Country Lodge.

From the East - Milwaukee, Madison

From I - 90 West

Merge onto I 94 West (towards Eau Claire)

Take Exit # 143 (Tomah, US 12, WI 21)

Turn left onto WI 21, go approximatly 1/4 mile

Turn left onto Wittig Rd.

Turn left into Cranberry Country Lodge.

DRAFT
Manure Task Force Meeting
August 24, 2005, DATCP, Madison

Task Force members in attendance:

Steve Born, Co-chair	Richard Gorder
Brian Rude, Co-chair	Andrew Hansen
Ken Blomberg	Wally Lueder
Dan Brick	Rebecca Power
Lisa Conley	Jay Richardson
Kevin Connors	Bob Selk
Dana Cook	Monte Wick
Dan Fischer	

Also in attendance: Approximately 30 agency staff and other interested parties.

The second meeting of the Manure Management Task Force was called to order at 9:35 a.m. and roll call was taken.

Motion by Fischer, second by Selk, to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2005, meeting.
Motion carried.

Co-chair Rude reviewed today's agenda—no additional agenda items were added. Comments from members were then solicited on the results of the opinion survey. It was pointed out that it was mainly an interest survey to be used as a starting point, and it needs work to further examine the issues.

Action Items:

Task Force Members:

- Get additional framework tools to Richard Castelnuovo by September 6 and review Decision-making Framework draft to evaluate means and options before next meeting.

Co-chairs:

- Revise Decision-making Framework with staff and distribute another draft for review by Task Force members.

DATCP/DNR Staff:

- Send to members the additional framework tools noted later in these minutes and collect additional tools (Castelnuovo). With co-chairs, revise the Decision-making Framework and distribute another draft for review to members.
- Arrange meeting locations in Tomah (September 26) and Oshkosh (October 20).
- See “Future Presentation Ideas” at the end of minutes and arrange for presentations at the next meeting(s).

Practices and Trends: Farm Management and Manure Handling—Ed Odgers, Section Chief, Conservation Engineering Section, DATCP

See PowerPoint handout entitled “*Manure Management Objectives*”

Odgers’ presentation focused on dairy manure management and its affect on the landscape and water quality. A survey done in 1995 and updated in 2004 showed that the majority of farms have increased manure storage. The study, however, does not look at specific issues of today, i.e., over application of manure, winter spreading, improper storage/stacking and untreated animal lots. Odgers described the types of manure management systems, what factors figure into a system, and why they do what they do, namely, size of farm, housing selection (bedding), storage options, labor and equipment, land availability and cost of production. Land-based manure management works most of the times but need solutions to fix it the few times it breaks down. The Task Force’s responsibility is to figure out how to deal with the problem but still keep farms competitive. By 2008 all farms will be required to have nutrient management plans with a cost-sharing component. The following handouts were discussed: A document entitled “*Rule Making Timelines for ATCP 50, ATCP 51 and NR 243*” and a spreadsheet entitled “*What is Required Under State and Local Laws.*” Besides cost sharing to farmers, incentives to recreational landowners were discussed.

Role of Conservation Planning in Risk Management—Kevin Connors, Director, Dane County Land and Water Resources Department

See PowerPoint handout entitled “*Conservation Planning*”

Connors’ presentation was divided into four categories: What is a conservation plan?; why/how is a conservation plan developed?; how do we know if a conservation plan is implemented and/or maintained?; and a summary.

Farmer Presentation—Karl Klessig with Saxon Homestead Farm

See PowerPoint handout entitled “*It Can Happen to You Too!*”

Klessig explained what happened to cause a manure spill at his farm in Cleveland, Manitowoc County, on June 22, 2002. He circulated a newspaper article regarding the spill and the citation he was issued because of it. Saxon Homestead Farm is a rotational grazing farm and is in a CAFO having approximately 850 animal units. All agricultural land in Manitowoc County is tiled, and Klessig explained that tiling is done on fields that do not drain themselves. Tile lines are installed three to four feet deep and carry surface and sub-surface water out of the field. Surface spreading of manure is done on their clay-loam soil because manure injection gets it closer to the tile line. Klessig then described Saxon Homestead Farm’s corrective actions and management changes to prevent a similar incident.

Group Discussion: Framework for Evaluating Options

Task Force members received a spreadsheet entitled “Decision-making Framework” with a list of means and options under the following headings: Research and Development/Emerging Technologies, Incentives, Information and Education, Regulation, Planning, Data Collection, Emergency Management and Other. The co-chairs asked members to add to the list, under each heading, tools to deal with manure management. In the discussion the following additional tools were suggested:

Research and Development (R&D)/Emerging Technologies

- Energy systems—bio-industry
- Cooperative/regional manure management
- Innovative Treatment Systems
 - Regional filter presses
- Liquid vs. solid alternative management systems
- Establish (outline) R&D grant program and recommend initiatives
- Manure spreading index/advisory (I&E?)
- Key factors—genesis of incidents
 - WBI
- BMP water quality (WQ) evaluation using WQ criteria
 - WBI
 - Research
- Role of tile system

Incentives

- Green-tier recognition/certification on manure management
- Health care incentive for manure management compliance
- Tax incentive to receive manure
- Fee waiver (i.e., waive permit fee if farmer attends a workshop)
- Safe harbor if following standards (higher level expected)

Information and Education (I&E)

- Roll out of R&D findings
- Educational materials/workshop for new technologies
- Public education on farming and environmental dynamics

Regulation

- Limits on winter manure spreading practices
- Other practices (some from NR243, conservation planning) could be included in manure management regulations
- Certification of manure haulers/applicators/landowners
 - Who is covered and how?
- Duration of storage required, I&E, C/S
- Record keeping
 - Maintain plan information
 - Confidentiality of records
 - Sanctions (590/ATCP50/NR243)
- Coordination of rules and regulations (simpler is better)
- Local regulation

Planning

- Relate manure management to water quality objectives (TMDLs, Green Tier, ISO)
- Comprehensive/whole farm planning
- Promote small-scale watershed plans

Data Collection

- Systematic—who and how
 - Appropriate measures
- Monitoring—volunteer programs including landowners

Emergency Management

- Protocol for private well and other emergency investigations
- Availability of CRP land for spreading in emergency
- Requirements to take manure in emergency
- Impediments to manure sharing
- Agency response team (DATCP-DNR)
- Increase portfolio of possible emergency practices (research)
- Documentation of emergency practices

Other

- Short-term storage approaches

Department staff will integrate/fuse the above-listed tools into the framework originally distributed to members. The revised framework will be distributed to members in the next few days with a homework assignment that members review the new document. If there are additions, they should get those to Richard Castelnuovo by Tuesday, September 6. Contact DATCP or DNR staff if more information is needed. Staff and the co-chairs will then rework the framework and send it to members as another draft for review. Before it is discussed at the September meeting, members should determine how each tool fits under the column headings of “Effectiveness,” “Economic Impacts-Producers and Others,” and “Feasibility/Acceptability.”

Meeting Handout:

A copy of an article was distributed entitled “Manure Management Task Force Tackles First Issue” from the Agri-View. It is an account of the first Task Force meeting held July 18.

Future Presentation Ideas:

- Idaho’s manure spreading index
- Iowa’s model for manure haulers
- Discovery Farms’ use of p-index
- Research at Discovery Farms and Pioneer Farm

Locations for September and October Task Force Meetings: In order to make it convenient for members to attend meetings, the co-chairs suggested having the September 26 meeting in the Tomah area and the October 20 meeting in the Oshkosh area. If possible, field events will be added to these meetings. Staff will research location options.

Meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.

Manure Management Task Force
 Decision-Making Framework
 First Revision September 26, 2005

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
<i>Research and Development/Emerging Technologies and Management</i>			
1. Research Agenda and Implementations (incentives)			
2. Research causes of incidents (role of tile systems)			
3. Energy systems (Digester)			
4. Alternative management systems (Grazing, spreading, advisory, regional filter presses, manure brokers)			
5. Alternative storage systems (Cooperative/region al management, liquid v. solid)			
6. Alternative disposal systems (new applications for sanitary treatment, incineration, composting)			

EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS			
MEANS AND OPTIONS	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
7. Evaluate BMP effectiveness			
<i>Incentives</i>			
1. Monetary (<i>cost-sharing, fee waiver, tax break for receiving manure insurance discounts</i>)			
2. Non-monetary (<i>health care coverage, Green Tier, cooperative compliance programs (CCPs), safe harbor if following standard</i>)			
<i>Information and Education</i>			
1. Technology transfer (<i>materials, workshops</i>)			
2. Conduct training for applicators, farmer, consultants			

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
3. Develop print and web-materials on MM			
4. Educate non-farming public			
Regulation			
1. Required practices (winter spreading restrictions and prohibitions, conservation planning)			
2. Mandatory storage capacity			
3. Manure haulers/applicators/landowners (certification, application)			

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
procedures)			Overall potential 1-High 2-Med 3-Low S-Short Term (within 3 yrs) L-Long Term (3 or more yrs)
4. Compensation programs (wells)			
5. Record keeping			
6. Roles and responsibilities: <i>federal, state, local (coordination)</i>			
Planning			
1. Develop planning considerations to reduce risks (<i>whole farm plan, EMS</i>)			
2. Target critical lands and operation for practices (TMDL,			

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
small-scale watershed plan			
Data Collection			
1. Improve environmental data collection related to manure incidents (develop protocols, share responsibilities)			
2. Improve data collection/research related to practices designed to avoid incidents			
3. Monitoring			
Emergency Management			
1. Review protocols (increase agency coordination)			
2. Emergency storage and disposal options (manure)			

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
<i>storage bank, CRP lands)</i>			
<i>3. Emergency response plan</i>			
<i>4. Expand EM practices (polymers, barriers)</i>			
<i>Other</i>			
<i>1. Short-term storage approaches (headland stacking, mixing solids/liquids)</i>			

Staff Analysis¹

Manure Management Task Force
 Decision-Making Framework
 First Revision September 26, 2005

MEANS AND OPTIONS		EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)	Overall potential	
1-High 2-Med 3-Low	S-Short Term (within 3 yrs) L-Long Term (3 or more yrs)			
<i>Research and Development/Emerging Technologies and Management</i>				
1. Research Agenda and Implementations (incentives)	Can be very effective, but investment needed, and payoff in the long-term	Must include analysis in research agenda and will increase funding need to complete. Will need consider WASI	Planning is a key first step in this long-term approach.	1L
2. Research causes of incidents (role of tile systems)	Critical, and can be instrumental in prevention of future incidents.	Would require diverting resources from other research or finding new funding source.	Very feasible, depending available funding and resources.	2L
3. Energy systems (Digester)	Not effective for water quality risk reduction	Expensive with payback if energy produced	Not feasible or acceptable to address manure runoff risks	2L
4. Alternative management systems (Grazing, spreading, advisory, regional filter presses, manure brokers)	Can effective depending on system. Grazing is very effective most of the year. Spreading advisories depend on landowner participation. With a more distinct market, brokerage could help distribute manure.	Can economically viable depending on system. Spreading advisory may reduce risks at low cost. Regional filter presses are expensive particularly transport costs.	Feasibility depends on approach. Brokering is currently not feasible, while advisory systems are. Grazing is not feasible for operators who have made investments in conventional systems. Centralized systems face issues of local acceptability and biosecurity.	Grazing 1L Spreading advisory 1S Regional filter presses 2L Manure brokers 2S

¹ This analysis is based on the best professional judgment of DNR and DATCP staff. It is intended as guidance for the task force, and is not intended to substitute for the opinions or recommendations of the task force.

EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS			
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)	Overall potential
5. Alternative storage systems (Cooperative/region al management, liquid v. solid)	Can be effective although no such systems exist.	Not economically viable at the present. Regional storage is expensive particularly transport costs. With current management systems, liquid storage has competitive advantage over solid storage.	Feasibility is highly regionally dependent. Centralized systems face issues of local acceptability and biosecurity. Research needed to identify non-liquid storage options and management changes necessary to implement.	2L S-Short Term (within 3 yrs) 2-Med 3-Low L-Long Term (3 or more yrs)
6. Alternative disposal systems (new applications for sanitary treatment, incineration, composting)	Can be effective but examples are few and opportunities are limited.	Economically impacts vary. Sales of compost may offset costs if markets exist, but initial investment required. Costs of conventional sanitary treatment are prohibitive. Incineration costs may be less, but may generate fly ash and other disposal costs.	Feasibility depends on approach. Composting is the most accessible approach, but requires on-farm investments, changes in management, and markets. Long-term approaches such as incineration require improved technology and regulatory flexibility (air permits).	Sanitary treatmt.3L Incineration 2L Composting 2L
7. Evaluate BMP effectiveness	Yes, if BMP's are applied, but considerable refinement will necessary (e.g. winter landspreading).	Costs increase as BMPs become more treatment oriented.	Evaluate and expand practices used in existing programs. Feasible if costs are reasonable.	1L
Incentives				
1. Monetary (cost-sharing, fee waiver, tax break for receiving manure insurance discounts)	Mixed track record; questionable effect over long-term. May need reinforcement (regulation)	Requires investment by farmers and other taxpayers. Can discount insurance premiums to reflect lower risk.	Funding is historically inadequate, and new funds will be limited. Presents compliance and oversight issue.	1L
2. Non-monetary (health care coverage, Green Tier, cooperative compliance programs (CCPs), safe harbor if following standard)	Promising but little track record of use. Favorable outcomes using Green Tier & CCPs with other industries.	May have lower costs than direct monetary approaches. Costs will range. Health care coverage can be expensive.	Face cultural and other barriers to establishing. DNR cannot statutorily provide safe harbor.	Health care coverage 2L Green Tier 1L CCPs 1L Safe Harbor 3L

EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
<i>Information and Education</i>			
1. <i>Technology transfer (materials, workshops)</i>	Well-established approach that can be effective with high level commitment. Requires understanding of barriers and outreach programs designed to effectively communicate information. But knowledge and intentions may not translate into actions.	Typically cost-effective, but does include costs to implement practices. To effectively use resources, may consider targeting outreach to high risk areas.	Accepted, farm friendly model that requires adequate education resources. Can develop in the short term using existing resources such as UWEX.
2. <i>Conduct training for applicators, farmer, consultants</i>	Targeted approach for haulers and consultants may be more effective than general farmer education	Typically cost-effective, but does include costs to implement practices.	Accepted approach that may require fewer resources if targeted. Can be developed in the short term using existing resources such as UWEX.
3. <i>Develop print and web-materials on MM</i>	M marginally effective without other outreach.	Low cost particularly web materials, but does include costs to implement practices.	Accepted approach that can be developed in the short term using existing resources such as UWEX.
4. <i>Educate non-farming public</i>	Not effective for reducing manure spreading risks. Improves public perception of farming and create positive environment for farmer changes in behavior.	Low cost; could reduce management costs associated with farm v. non-farm conflict	Accepted approach that can be developed in the short term using existing resources such as UWEX.

MEANS AND OPTIONS

EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS			
MEANS AND OPTIONS	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Overall potential
			Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
Regulation			
1. <i>Required practices (winter spreading restrictions and prohibitions, conservation planning)</i>	Highly effective, depending on administering government agency, resource commitments, compliance monitoring and follow up.	Compliance costs vary. Prohibitions may necessitate added storage and other high costs. Conservation planning yields multiple benefits with a relatively small investment.	Farmer resistance is a significant barrier that may be overcome with incentives or other approaches. Winter spreading restrictions and prohibitions 1L Conservation Planning 1S
2. <i>Mandatory storage capacity</i>	Highly effective, depending on administering government agency, resource commitments, compliance monitoring and follow up.	High costs that may be offset cost-sharing, cost savings (e.g. nutrient conservation), and private benefits (e.g. more convenient management)	Farmer resistance is a significant barrier that may be overcome with incentives or other approaches. 2L
3. <i>Manure haulers/applicators/landowners (certification, application procedures)</i>	While it may only apply to limited farms (those hiring haulers), it reaches those who handle larger quantities.	Increased costs may be passed on to landowners in the form of higher fees.	It avoids problems of direct regulation of farmers, and works through professional group whose livelihood depends on better management of manure. 1S
4. <i>Compensation programs (wells)</i>	Very effective as long as practices implement to prevent future incidents.	Requires \$100,000-200,000 annual public investment. Reduces farmer's liability exposure.	Need to investigate options such as the current well abandonment program for pesticides. Feasible in the short-term, but face historical barriers that may be overcome by improved testing methods. 1S
5. <i>Record keeping</i>	Can be effective in reinforcing good practices, documenting daily activities, providing accountability, and illustrating areas of liability exposure	Imposes additional costs which may be minimized or more easily absorbed by larger operations	Will face farmer resistance based on time commitments, privacy, new liability for failure to keep records and other concerns. 1L

MEANS AND OPTIONS

EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS			
MEANS AND OPTIONS	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
			Overall potential
<i>6. Roles and responsibilities: federal, state, local (coordination)</i>	Each approach has its strengths. Local regulation can be timely and responsive to local conditions. However, it may reflect local biases. State regulation is standardized and uniformly administered. Federal regulation is the least effective unless administered as part of delegated authority.	Additional regulation means additional costs. But costs may vary depending on the existing capacity to administer. There may be efficiencies gained by regulating at the state v. local level.	<p>There is a hierarchy of regulation that must be considered. For example, the state may trump local regulation. At the local level, regulation may be acceptable if developed through consensus process. It is more difficult to build consensus regarding regulation on the state level.</p> <p>Implementation of state regulation may difficult if resources are not set aside for this purpose.</p>
<i>Planning</i>			
<i>1. Develop planning considerations to reduce risks (whole farm plan, EMS)</i>	Provides multiple benefits but its effectiveness depends on the extent it focuses manure management	Will impose costs on farmers which may be reduced by combining with other planning activities. May provide offsetting benefits that include reduced risks and new marketing opportunities.	<p>This is more feasible for larger operations, and is not likely to gain widespread acceptance.</p>
<i>2. Target critical lands and operation for practices (TMDL, small-scale watershed plan)</i>	Can be effective in targeting farms where runoff events are likely, but runoff events may happen elsewhere.	This is a costly approach that will be justified only if it achieves other purposes.	<p>Requires statewide assessments and public documentation. May meet resistance from farm groups and others who fear increased regulation on many fronts.</p>
<i>Data Collection</i>			
<i>1. Improve environmental data collection related to manure incidents (develop protocols, share</i>	Improved data collection is a bedrock requirement for future actions. It will establish the foundation and justification for voluntary and regulatory	<p>This approach can be implemented without significant financial outlays. Building on existing approaches used by DNR and DATCP will ensure effectiveness while holding down costs.</p>	<p>This can be accomplished in the short-term. DATCP and DNR can cooperate to make improvements. Changes in this area are likely to receive support from different quarters, but there could be concerns about increased liability.</p>

EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
1. <i>Identify responsibilities</i>) approaches			
2. <i>Improve data collection/research related to practices designed to avoid incidents</i>	Better understanding of impact of practices is critical. We may need better research approaches to improve collection.	This approach requires funding to conduct research. There will be competition for research dollars.	This is more of a long-term approach.
3. <i>Monitoring</i>	Monitoring takes time to collect adequate samples and the results may be difficult to interpret.	Can be costly if properly designed.	This is a long-term approach.
<i>Emergency Management</i>			
1. <i>Review protocols (increase agency coordination)</i>	Critical to understanding causes and formulating solutions	Represents an incremental cost since agencies already investigate. Can control costs by looking for opportunities to coordinate in accordance with agency roles.	State-level investigation is more acceptable than local investigation for several reasons. It draws on expertise, is repeatable, and is not influenced by pressures.
2. <i>Emergency storage and disposal options (manure storage bank, CRP lands)</i>	May be effective to avoid catastrophic incidents. Intermediate steps needed to establish.	Costs including transportation must be considered.	This is a long-term approach. Some options may not be feasible because of legal constraints.
3. <i>Emergency response plan</i>	Simple, effective tool to prepare. Effective for production areas. Much less effective for land application areas.	May impose minor costs involved in preparation.	Encouraged by a wide variety of interests. Attractive to farmers as approach to limit impact of incidents and exposure to legal problems.

MEANS AND OPTIONS	EVALUATION OF MEANS AND OPTIONS		
	Effectiveness	Economic Impacts-Producers and Others	Feasibility/Acceptability (short- v. long-term)
4. Expand EM practices (polymers, barriers)	Will be effective if these practices become more available and are too costly.	There are economic barriers to researching and making new products and technologies available.	A longer term solution that requires research and field testing. Usable practices may not be available in the near term. 2L
<i>Other</i>			
1. Short-term storage approaches (headland stacking, mixing solids/liquids)	Can provide stop gap solutions, but may create new risks if accompanied by longer term solutions	Additional costs can be expected.	Provides flexibility for producers but does offer long term solutions. 1S

Spill Update



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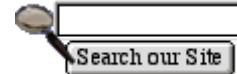


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Today's
Front page

Fischer Creek fish kill investigated, DNR says

By Kristopher Wenn
Herald Times Reporter

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MANITOWOC — The state Department of Natural Resources said Tuesday it was investigating a "significant" fish kill that left hundreds of fish dead in Fischer Creek between Interstate 43 and the mouth of the waterway at Lake Michigan.

The dead fish ranged from 4 to 30 inches in length and included game species such as rainbow and brook trout, said Steve Surendonk, DNR fisheries technician, who identified a manure spill from dairy operations as a likely cause.

Dead fish were collected and held for evidence and water samples were sent to the state lab of hygiene, in Madison, he said.

"It was a significant event," he said.

A complaint was filed to the DNR on Friday after a witness noticed the dead fish in the water at Fischer Creek Park, said Ryan Voldenberg, a conservation warden in Mishicot. Voldenberg, who is in charge of overseeing the case, said the investigation probably would be completed by next week.

"There are some steps that we still have to take in order to be sure of the cause," he said.

Regardless of what the wardens find, the results could leave them with more questions than answers, said Russ Tooley, of Manitowoc, a member of the Centerville C.A.R.E.S. environmental advocacy group.

"The cause of the problem could have come from many places in one area and so it might turn out to be a multi-point source," he said.

Tooley and other environmental advocates said that fish kills, including one last November at Point Creek, result from the DNR's inability to enforce wastewater laws on agribusiness.



"I appreciate what they do," he said of the agency. "I just don't think they're doing the job on the farm."

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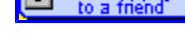
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Sept. 16, 2005
Contact: Jane Larson 608-224-5005

MADISON - Dry fall weather conditions in many parts of the state call for extra care in applying manure, according to the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. Water levels have been significantly reduced in many lakes and streams, making them highly vulnerable to even small discharges of polluted runoff, particularly from liquid manure applications.

"All farm operators and manure applicators should be aware of the increased risk," said Jim Vanden Brook, Water Quality Section Chief and Manure Management Task Force staffer.

Fish and other aquatic animals are at risk because low levels of water result in less dilution, higher temperatures and less oxygen. Dry-weather field conditions tend to result in runoff, especially after manure applications.

Fields harvested for corn silage are very susceptible to runoff when manure is applied. Corn silage fields are smooth, hard and compact and do not accept moisture easily when it rains.

Steps to reduce risk of manure runoff include:

- Creating ample buffer zones
- Incorporating with rough tillage soon after application
- Reducing application rates
- Avoiding applications when rainfall is predicted. Even light rainfall can cause runoff in certain dry weather conditions.

Farmers and manure applicators with questions can contact Vanden Brook at 608-224-4502. If a spill occurs, contact Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Spill Hotline at 1-800-943-0003 and your county conservation staff immediately.